

SHELBURNE
MUSEUM



A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR THOMAS DENENBERG

This fall, in dramatic fashion lifted by a giant crane visible from Route 7, the steel went up on the Perry Center for Native American Art. Just like that, the building became possible to visualize beyond architects' renderings. The curvature of the structure is evident, and one can imagine spaces inside for galleries and housing of the Indigenous collection.

The Perry Center building will be substantially complete by this fall, and after fine tuning the complex heating, ventilation, and air conditioning systems, preparing the Center to house art, installing exhibitions, and transferring the collection to the housing facility within the building, we anticipate opening in 2027.

As the new structure takes shape, we take a moment to consider the legacy that opened the door for the Perry Center. Museum founder Electra Havemeyer Webb was drawn to the artistry of Native American basket-making, which fit perfectly into her collecting aesthetic focused on pattern (quilts, for example) and art in the quotidian items of everyday life (trade signs, for example). In this way, the Perry Center is a full-circle moment for the Museum.

Speaking of full circle, we have two exhibitions this year that elevate the very best of Shelburne Museum. **Varied & Alive: New and Rarely Seen Treasures from the Collection** opens on May 9 and is a Curators' choice of the best of the best in our collection that will bring to light many beloved paintings, folk art pieces, and textiles that haven't been on view in decades. **Norman Rockwell: At Home in Vermont** is a homecoming for the artist who spent significant time in southern Vermont. Visitors will get the chance to view iconic Rockwells and gain insight into the Arlington artist circle that included Mead Schaeffer (1898–1980), John Atherton (1900–1952), Gene Pelham (1909–2004), and Anna Mary Robertson "Grandma" Moses (1860–1961).

While the days are gradually getting longer and brighter, I have to take a moment and look back on another brilliant celebration during winter's shortest days—Winter Lights. While December, in particular, was a cold month, we were blessed with snow-covered grounds that made the lights seem to shine even more brightly. Once again, tens of thousands of visitors bundled up to stroll through the awe inspiring light installations from the Big Top circus to Beach Woods, and past the jaw-dropping *Ticonderoga*. Special thanks to lead sponsors Radiance, Lake Champlain Chocolates, and PC Construction along with support from Union Bank, Farrell Distributing, and Global Foundries. We've already begun to plan for Winter Lights 2026!

Speaking of construction, when CRW Woods approached us about donating a zero emission excavator to our grounds crew, our response was gratitude and then, "How soon can it be here?" The Volvo ECR25 electric compact excavator arrived in late January. In addition to aligning with the Museum's commitment to sustainability, the quiet machine will be ideal for any number of projects across campus from constructing bases for outdoor sculpture to working near exhibition buildings without the disruptive noise of a diesel engine.

As always, your support in many ways from Annual Fund donations to corporate sponsorship, and in-kind support such as the excavator from Wood's CRW, is vital to sustaining the Museum now and for future generations.

Sincerely yours,

Thomas Denenberg, PhD
John Wilmerding Director & CEO

(above) Tom Denenberg, the John Wilmerding Director & CEO of Shelburne Museum, accepts the keys to a Volvo ECR25 electric compact excavator from Chris Palmer, President of Wood's CRW, with the Museum's iconic Round Barn in the background.

(cover) R.P. Thrall, **Minnie From the Outskirts of Village**, 1876. Oil on canvas, 26 7/8 x 21 7/8 in. Collection of Shelburne Museum, museum purchase. 1960-233. Photography by Andy Duback.



Tending Shelburne's Campus Requires Research & Planning

Winter Months are for Thinking Big about the Grounds and Gardens

As winter's days grow longer and the sun gets stronger, it's hard not to longingly envision warmer days ahead. Many of the gardeners among us are known to flip through nursery catalogs planning for spring and imagining our gardens in full bloom. For Mike Ingalls, the Museum's Landscape and Garden Manager, it's no different. Except he plans on a scale much greater than the average home gardener! His order of annuals, for example, will be in the neighborhood of 2,500 starts that will arrive in April to be nurtured in the Museum greenhouse before beautifying the campus grounds.

The Museum's dozens of planted gardens and apple trees, hundreds of lilac and rose bushes, and acres of lawn are all in Ingalls' purview. When the Museum is open, he oversees a team of nine grounds and garden workers plus half a dozen volunteers who keep campus looking lush and bountiful.

"What I like about the job is no one day is the same for me. I really like the diversity of it. One day I'm in the greenhouse. The next, I'm in the field, or I'm running equipment, which I also enjoy," Ingalls said.

Ingalls is an arborist and horticulturalist. Before coming to the Museum, he managed the city of South Burlington's

trees and plantings, and he worked at The Intervale Center, a non-profit in Burlington, where he focused on cultivating native plants for conservation projects throughout the state. A Vermonter, Ingalls grew up in Richmond and fondly recalls school field trips to the Museum.

During the winter months, he works on long-term planning for the grounds and gardens including researching the history of the plantings, many of which date to the Museum's early days and were part of founder Electra Havemeyer Webb's vision that the grounds be as much a part of the experience as the art and architecture at Shelburne Museum. For example, the lilac bushes that bloom in May and welcome visitors in the early season with hues of purple and a heady scent, originally came from Mrs. Webb's Long Island home and were imported from France. How to manage these plants and trees, as well, replacing them on a schedule as they age, is an important part of Ingalls' focus.

"We realize that gardens are one of the favorite aspects of a visit to Shelburne Museum," Ingalls said. "We want to make sure the plants and the soil that supports them are vibrant and healthy for generations to come."

Mike Ingalls then and now. In the photo on the left, Mike is with school pals on the steps of School House. He is second from right. In the photo on the right, Mike strikes the same pose decades later! Photo on left courtesy Mike Ingalls. Photo on right by Isa DeMarco.



Baskets Acquired in 1946 Form the Root of Shelburne's Indigenous Collection

Museum Founder's Vision Included Native American Art

The Perry Center for Native American Art is starting to take shape, literally, with its curved steel skeleton visible in places and bright yellow sheathing covering it in others. When completed, the Perry Center will be home to 900 items from 300 Tribal Nations. This includes the Perry Collection of Native American masterworks gathered by Anthony and Tessa Perry, along with the Museum's collection of Indigenous material that Museum founder Electra Havemeyer Webb collected as part of her vision for Shelburne Museum.

With a long-standing penchant for collecting outside the canons of fine art—Mrs. Webb was among the trailblazing women who defined the very idea of American “folk” art in the second quarter of the 20th century—it comes as no surprise to discover she had a sustained interest in Native American art and culture.

When she was planning the Museum, Mrs. Webb engaged the services of Innocenti and Webel, one of the country's premier landscape architecture firms, and, following the Scandinavian tradition of open air “folk” museums, they enhanced the topography of the site, creating roads, ponds, rock outcroppings, and a small forest before moving historic structures from upstate New York, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Vermont to form an idealized New England village. Mrs. Webb sought to create an immersive experience, rather than historical verisimilitude. In the southwest corner of the original plan for Shelburne Museum lay a proposed “Indian Trading Post,” a blockhouse surrounded by fanciful interpretations of Indigenous architecture.

Webb included the compound in homage to Shelburne's long history as a place of cultural exchange, but also to house a specific and important collection that would form the root of the Museum's Indigenous collection. In 1946 she purchased at auction select items from Louis Comfort Tiffany's “Indian Room,” a prominent feature of his estate Laurelton Hall. Built between 1902 and 1905 in



Basket among those purchased from the estate of Louis Comfort Tiffany by Mrs. Webb in 1946. Artist formerly known (Salish or possibly Cowlitz), **Basket**, before 1933. 14 1/2 x 35 x 20 1/2 in. Collection of Shelburne Museum, gift of Electra Havemeyer Webb. 1947-17.16. Photography by Pitkin Studio, Rockford, IL, USA.

Oyster Bay, New York, Laurelton Hall stood as the apogee of Tiffany's endeavors to merge the fine and decorative arts into a single “aesthetic unity,” in the words of Alice Cooney Frelinghuysen, the Anthony W. and Lulu C. Wang Curator of American Decorative Arts at The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York and Shelburne Museum Trustee. The prominence of Native American art, principally from Northwest Coast Nations in Laurelton Hall is seen in a great totem pole positioned by the driveway to welcome visitors, as well as some 500 smaller items carefully installed in the interior, with the “Indian Room” as centerpiece.



Electra Havemeyer Webb with members of the Mandan Tribe from North Dakota, photographed in 1934. Mrs. Webb's interest in Native American art was evident in her earliest plans for the Museum.

Webb's intentions for an Indigenous installation at Shelburne remained a plan on paper in her lifetime. Shortly after her death in 1960, the Museum partially realized her vision with the construction of two Adirondack cabins in a pine forest to suggest the environment across the lake. Prizing narrative over accuracy, Mrs. Webb's Native American collections were installed along with items gathered by her son and other family members with little regard for geographic or cultural specificity. In the 1990s, Museum staff, responding to changing professional ethics, began to remove the material from public view. The story could have ended then and there were it not for Teresa Perry approaching the Museum about gifting the Perry Collection to the Museum. The Perry Center for Native American Art is scheduled to be complete in 2026 and open in 2027.



Tom Denenberg

Early interior of Beach Lodge. Mrs. Webb's Native American collections were installed along with items gathered by her son and other family members with little regard for geographic or cultural specificity. In the 1990s, Museum staff, responding to changing professional ethics, began to remove the material from public view. Unidentified photographer, Early Exhibition in Beach Lodge, 1962. Fotorite print, 3 3/4 x 5 in. Collection of Shelburne Museum Archives. PS4.311121.

Grouping of baskets purchased by Mrs. Webb in 1946 from Louis Comfort Tiffany's Long Island estate Laurelton Hall. Artists formerly known (Yup'ik, Northern Plateau Tribe, Possibly Okanagon, Klikitat or Plateau-Region Tribe, and Salish or Columbia River Tribe), **Lidded Basket, Berry Basket, Basket, and Carrying Basket**, late 19th or early 20th century. Collection of Shelburne Museum, gifts of Electra Havemeyer Webb & J. Watson Webb, Jr. 1947-17.1, 3 & 6 and 1973-13. Photography by Andy Duback.



Varied & Alive: New and Rarely Seen Treasures from the Collection



Guided by founder Electra Havemeyer Webb's vision of Shelburne Museum as a "project varied and alive," this upcoming exhibition celebrates the Museum's vast and varied permanent collection. Objects ranging from the 19th to the mid-20th centuries will showcase the incredible depth and breadth of the Museum's collection rooted in Mrs. Webb's collecting legacy. A curatorial tour de force, objects on view include folk art paintings, circus posters, porcelain, textiles, toys, and trade signs—some beloved favorites, others not seen in decades.

Co-curated by Kory Rogers, the Francie and John Downing Senior Curator of American Art, and Katie Wood Kirchoff, the Alice Cooney Frelinghuysen Curator of American Decorative Arts, **Varied & Alive: New and Rarely Seen Treasures from the Collection** is organized in five thematic sections: Interior Lives, Wildlife, Life on the Go, Signs of Life, and After Life.

INTERIOR LIVES plumbs the depths of Shelburne Museum's collections of domestic furnishings and traditional decorative arts found in the home through domestic textiles (bed rugs, hooked rugs, and quilts), furniture, and miniature vignettes of activities that take place in the home.

WILDLIFE highlights iconic creatures such as carved and gilded eagles, chalkware cats and dogs, fishing decoys, ceramic monkeys, anthropomorphic burl carvings, and more.

LIFE ON THE GO takes its cues from the Webb family's early collections of horse-drawn vehicles and the Museum's extensive holdings related to transportation. Locomotive weathervanes, paintings of sidewheel steamers by James Bard, a silver "Commodore's Cup," and toy trains by Vermonter Frank Tilton will captivate visitors of all ages.

SIGNS OF LIFE features trade signs and whirligigs, many of which have not been on view in decades, from the Museum's exceptional collection of American folk art sculpture.

AFTER LIFE invites visitors to shake off their mortal coils and consider the ways that we remember and memorialize departed souls, from pets and family members to public figures. This section of the exhibition also explores ideas of the great beyond through the exhibition of an extraordinary, rare 22-foot-long Millerite banner.

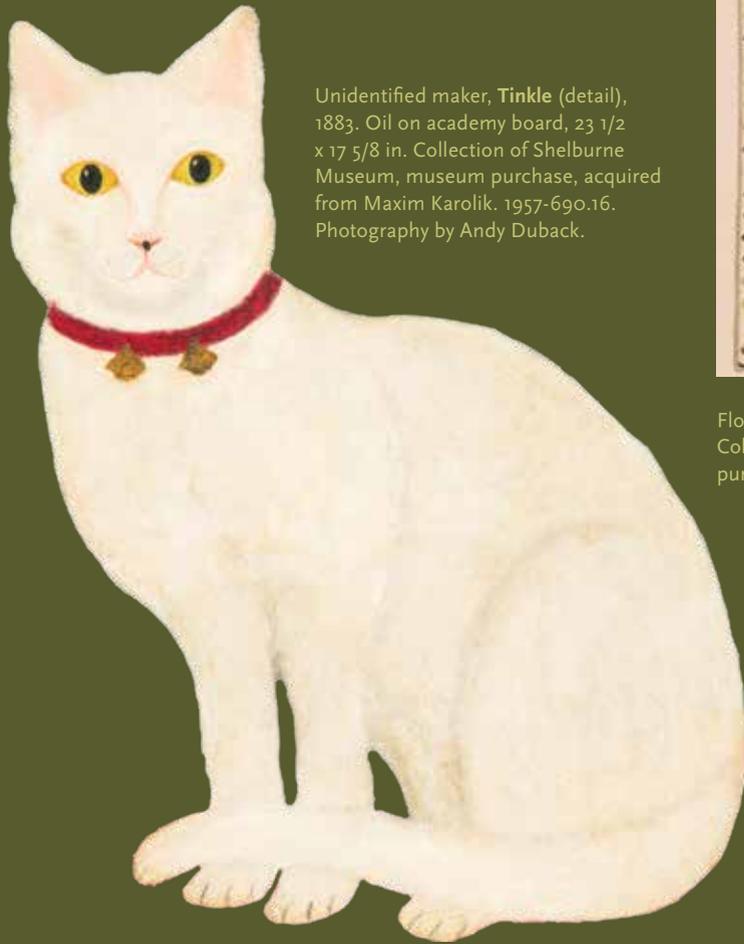
Varied & Alive:
New and Rarely Seen Treasures from the Collection
Pizzagalli Center for Art and Education, Colgate Gallery
 May 9–October 25, 2026

Made possible by the generous support of the Marie and John Zimmermann Fund and Todd R. Lockwood.



Unidentified photographer, **Zasu Pitts and Electra Havemeyer Webb** outside **Stagecoach Inn**, 1958. Gelatin silver print, 8 x 10 in. Collection of Shelburne Museum Archives. PS1.10-Pitts.1.

(above) Unidentified maker, **Millerite Banner**, ca. 1840s. Ink and paint on cotton, 51 1/2 x 194 1/2 in. Collection of Shelburne Museum, museum purchase. 1993-3. Photography by Andy Duback.



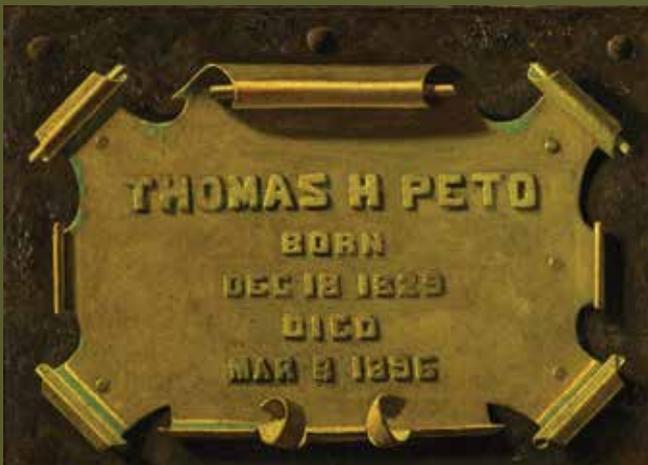
Unidentified maker, **Tinkle** (detail), 1883. Oil on academy board, 23 1/2 x 17 5/8 in. Collection of Shelburne Museum, museum purchase, acquired from Maxim Karolik. 1957-690.16. Photography by Andy Duback.



Florence Peto, **Calico Garden Quilt**, 1951. Cotton, 48 1/2 x 38 1/2 in. Collection of Shelburne Museum, museum purchase. 1952-548. Photography by Andy Duback.



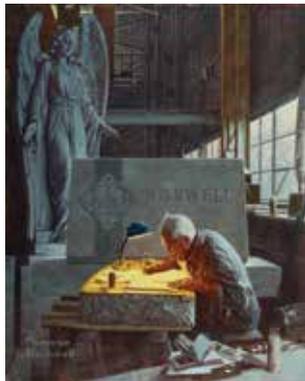
Narcissa Niblack Thorne, **Thorne Room**, 1930–66. Mixed media, 15 1/4 x 23 1/4 x 10 1/4 in. Collection of Shelburne Museum, gift of William C. Ellis. 2024-6. Photography by Andy Duback.



John Frederick Peto, **Memento Mori for Thomas Peto**, 1904. Oil on canvas, 17 5/8 x 21 3/4 in. Collection of Shelburne Museum, gift of Stuart P. Feld and Sue K. Feld, in memory of John Wilmerding, our devoted friend for more than a half century, 2025-15.1. Photography by Andy Duback.

2026 Exhibition Highlights

Focus Exhibition on view June 20–October 25



Norman Rockwell: At Home in Vermont

Norman Rockwell: At Home in Vermont explores how America's beloved illustrator Norman Rockwell (1894–1978) crafted an idealized vision of Vermont—nostalgic, resilient, and mythic—during his most prolific years in Arlington, Vermont, from 1939 to 1953. In his works, Rockwell offered a nation battered by the Great Depression and weathering World War II a reassuring image of American life: orderly, self-reliant, and picturesque.

Pizzagalli Center for Art and Education, Murphy Gallery

Supported by the Judith and James Pizzagalli American Paintings Endowment, Donna and Marvin Schwartz, Todd R. Lockwood, the Frelinghuysen Foundation, the M&T Charitable Foundation, and Maplefields.

Norman Rockwell, *The Craftsman*, 1963. Oil on canvas, 47 1/4 x 38 1/4 in. Collection of Shelburne Museum, gift of Polycor and Rock of Ages Corporation. 2024-12.1. Photography by Andy Duback.

On view May 9–October 25



Varied & Alive: New and Rarely Seen Treasures from the Collection

Guided by founder Electra Havemeyer Webb's vision of the Museum as a "project varied and alive," this exhibition celebrates the vast and varied permanent collection. Objects showcase the incredible depth and breadth of the Museum's collection rooted in Mrs. Webb's collecting legacy including folk art paintings, circus posters, porcelain, textiles, toys, and trade signs—some beloved favorites, others not seen in decades.

Pizzagalli Center for Art and Education, Colgate Gallery

Supported by the Marie and John Zimmermann Fund and Todd R. Lockwood.

Florence Peto, *Calico Garden Quilt* (detail), 1951. Cotton, 48 1/2 x 38 1/2 in. Collection of Shelburne Museum, museum purchase. 1952-54.8. Photography by Andy Duback.



Carl D'Alvia: (mono)LITHS

Carl D'Alvia's brightly colored aluminum sculptures bring a sense of play and whimsy to Shelburne Museum's expansive grounds. Referencing ancient monoliths as well as 20th-century sculptural icons, these monumental forms are both hard-edged and humorous, serious yet soft, collapsing traditional binaries with wit and invention.

Museum Grounds

Supported by Todd R. Lockwood.

Carl D'Alvia, *Tandem*, 2025. Auto paint on aluminum, 126 x 144 x 29 in. Courtesy of the artist and Hesse Flatow Gallery. Photography by Charles Benton.



On Point: Needlework from the Garthwaite Family Collection

Extraordinary examples of schoolgirl artworks made in Vermont, ranging from samplers and silk-on-silk embroideries to memorials, family registers, theorem paintings, and more. Special emphasis on research into women's education in the region.

The Dana-Spencer Textile Galleries at Hat & Fragrance

Supported by Todd R. Lockwood.

Unidentified maker, *The Shepherdess of the Alps* (detail), ca. 1815. Silk and watercolor on silk ground, 14 1/2 x 12 1/8 in. Collection of Shelburne Museum, Garthwaite Family Collection. 2026-1.81. Photography by Andy Duback



Big River: Ogden Pleissner in Wyoming

The landscape of the American West has long been a source of inspiration for artists. American 20th-century painter Ogden Pleissner often recalled formative experiences spent at the CM Ranch and the nearby Wind River Reservation. Sketches, watercolors, oil paintings, and select archival materials consider Pleissner's engagement with the land and the settler and Indigenous communities who call this place home.

Pleissner Gallery

Supported by the Oakland Foundation and Kitty Coppock.

Ogden M. Pleissner, *Untitled* (detail), 1923–45. Watercolor on paper, 15 x 21 7/8 in. Collection of Shelburne Museum, bequest of Ogden M. Pleissner. 1985-31.51. Photography by Andy Duback.

Shelburne Museum exhibitions are also generously supported by our Members and donors to the Annual Fund.

Events

For a complete listing of upcoming events please visit shelburnemuseum.org

Webinar

Nature Drawing for All

Wednesdays, March 4 and 18, 12:00–1:00 p.m.

In this free, virtual drawing series, explore the natural world through creative expression in a friendly and informative structure. You'll develop and refine your skills, building comfort and confidence in landscapes, botanicals, and capturing nature. We will be inspired by works from the Museum's collection and scenes from the grounds and gardens. For artists of all ages and skill levels. Designed to work with materials most folks have at home. Free. Registration required. Visit website to register.

Webinar

Caring for Treasures at Home: Shelburne Museum Conservators Answer Your Questions

Monday, March 9, 12:00–1:00 p.m.

Conservators rely on science, art history, and knowledge of art materials to preserve cultural heritage for future generations. In this responsive webinar, Director of Collections & Conservation Nancie Ravenel and Associate Conservator Awyn Rileybird answer your questions about preserving textiles, objects, paintings, photos, or other beloved belongings you have at home. Conservators will select questions and themes to answer in their presentation and will also engage in a live Q & A. Free. Registration required. Visit website to register.

Webinar

Varied & Alive: A Closer Look

Thursdays, March 26 and April 2, 6:00–7:00 p.m.

Let's dive in deep, exploring highlights from the exhibition **Varied & Alive: New and Rarely Seen Treasures from the Collection**. Learn contextual, artistic, and historical background on selected works after engaging in close-looking and discussion. Curator Katie Wood Kirchoff (March 26) and Senior Curator Kory Rogers (April 2) provide unique opportunities to engage with the Museum's permanent collection. Free. Registration required. Visit website to register.

Exhibition Preview

Norman Rockwell: At Home in Vermont

Wednesday, April 29, 6:00 p.m.

Join us in-person or online for a preview of the exhibition **Norman Rockwell: At Home in Vermont**, on view June 20–October 25. In this illustrated lecture, Tom Denenberg, the John Wilmerding Director & CEO of Shelburne Museum will explore the history of artist/illustrators in New England in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Important figures include Winslow Homer, N.C. Wyeth, Maxfield Parrish, Rockwell Kent, and Norman Rockwell—all of whom maintained a complicated relationship with commercial work as they pursued careers as creative practitioners in an era that witnessed the development of the persona of the modern artist. Lecture followed by audience Q&A. Free. Zoom: Advance registration required. In-person: Limited seating; advance registration strongly recommended.

Webinar

On Point: New Research into Vermont Needlework

Wednesday, April 15, 6:00–7:00 p.m.

Join Curator Katie Wood Kirchoff in conversation with the Vermont Sampler Initiative's Ellen Thompson to explore extraordinary examples of schoolgirl artworks made in Vermont, ranging from traditional samplers and silk-on-silk embroideries to memorials and family registers. This webinar will preview **On Point: Needlework from the Garthwaite Family Collection**. Free. Registration required. Visit website to register.

Member Opening

Varied & Alive: New and Rarely Seen Treasures from the Collection

Thursday, May 7, 6:30–8:00 p.m., Pizzagalli Center for Art and Education, Colgate Gallery

Members, be the first to experience this curatorial tour de force featuring some of the best loved objects from the Museum's permanent collection along with objects that haven't been on view in decades. Free with active Membership. Registration required.

Event

Community Day

Saturday, May 9, 10:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m.

Community Day kicks off an exciting new season at the Museum! Come experience inspiring new exhibitions and visit the beloved galleries, buildings, and gardens that make Shelburne Museum a place like no other. Throughout the day there will be gallery talks, artmaking, games, and activities. Free. Sponsored by the Vermont Community Foundation.

Member Opening

Norman Rockwell: At Home in Vermont

Saturday, June 20, 6:30–8:00 p.m., Pizzagalli Center for Art and Education, Murphy Gallery

Exclusive Member preview of this season's focus exhibition featuring America's beloved illustrator who crafted an idealized vision of Vermont—nostalgic, resilient, and mythic—during his most prolific years in Arlington, Vermont. Free with active Membership. Registration required.

Save the Dates

Event

Shelburne Summer Nights

Thursdays, June 25, July 23, and August 27, 5:00–7:30 p.m.

Activities for all ages, live music, food trucks, access to Museum buildings, lawn games, and community! Free.

Shelburne Summer Nights are generously supported by an anonymous foundation, our Members, and donors to the Annual Fund.



Winter Lights



Winter Lights delighted visitors of all ages this season. A blanket of snow on the ground virtually the entire run made the lights shine even more brightly, adding to the magic that draws tens of thousands of visitors to the Museum during the holiday season. Whether marveling at the *Ticonderoga* in a sea of light or strolling through the mesmerizing Beach Woods, Winter Lights has become a tradition for locals and a destination for visitors. Members enjoyed special events that got them in the spirit with special receptions, cookies and crafts, and community!

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Electra's Engineers

In 2003, Shelburne Museum was fortunate to partner with a group of local train enthusiasts on the design and construction of an American Flyer S-Scale Model O-Gauge train layout in the Museum's Toy Shop exhibition. During this installation, the Museum's Curators affectionately dubbed the group "Electra's Engineers," in honor of the Museum's founder, Electra Havemeyer Webb, who first

brought American Flyer trains to the Museum in 1954. For more than two decades, this team of dedicated volunteers has maintained the Toy Shop train layout and created special installations like this one seen by tens of thousands of visitors to Winter Lights, carrying forward Mrs. Webb's vision.

Electra's Engineers at work in the basement of Diamond Barn where they installed a model train for Winter Lights. Photography by Daria Bishop.



HOURS

May 9–October 25, 2026
Daily 10:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m.



shelburnemuseum.org

Talk to us

Need more information?
Looking to get involved?
Membership Office:
(802) 985-0923
info@shelburnemuseum.org

Pitching in: Volunteer finds community in the Museum gardens



"After working as a Museum Guide for a season, which was pure pleasure, I decided to volunteer in the gardens last summer. I thought I'd come in once a week, but I soon found myself volunteering as often as possible. The weeding, raking, and other tasks provided me with zen time—listening to music or audiobooks or nothing—and I was happy to chat with visitors who are always in a good mood and have lots of questions! I was getting as much exercise as I wanted and came and went as I pleased. **I couldn't find more beautiful gardens and nicer, more appreciative folks to work with.** I'm looking forward to getting my hands in the dirt again next season!"

Gail Martin, Volunteer

We love our volunteers and are always looking for help in the gardens and beyond! Contact Catie Camp, Manager Volunteer Programs, 802-985-0831 or volunteer@shelburnemuseum.org if you'd like to pitch in!